

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 INR-07 NSC-05 CIAE-00 /038 W

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R 281506Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9693

INFO DOD WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 994

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PINR (JACQUES, GRACIA)

SUBJECT: GEN. JACQUES ILL

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. LE MATIN IN ITS APRIL 27-28 EDITION ALLUDED TO CURRENT ILLNESS OF PRESIDENTIAL GUARD (PG) COMMANDER, BRIG. GEN. GRACIA JACQUES. IT STATED THAT JACQUES WAS TAKING HIS DOCTOR'S ADVISE TO TAKE A FEW DAY'S REST TO RECOVER FROM OVERWORK AND FATIGUE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT - THERE IS NO DOUBT JACQUES HAS NOT LOOKED WELL RECENTLY, AND FOR SEVERAL DAYS LAST WEEK CAME TO THE PALACE WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN BED. RECENTLY COL. JEAN THOMAS, E.O. QT ARMED FORCES GHQ, HAS BEEN SPENDING HALF-DAYS AT THE PALACE, APPARENTLY FILLING IN FOR JACQUES. JACQUES ALSO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE CEREMONIES WELCOMING ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT KAUNDA APRIL 15. HOWEVER, JACQUES MAY IN FACT BE SUFFERING FROM NOTHING MORE THAN UNDOUBTED STRAIN AND FATIGUE, WHICH ARE BOUND TO WEAKEN ANY 68 YEAR OLD MAN IN HIS PORTLY PHYSICAL CONDITION. ON APRIL 26 JACQUES WAS SEEN BEING DRIVEN AROUND THE CITY IN HIS CAR, AND HE CHEERFULLY RETURNED A SNAPPY SALUTE TO DATT.

3. ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT THAT JACQUES' HEALTH WILL FORCE HIM TO STEP DOWN IN NEAR FUTURE, WE ALSO DOUBT THAT, WERE THAT TO HAPPEN, IT WOULD POSE AN UNDUE POLITICAL RISK FOR PRESIDENT DUVALIER. TWO CAPABLE AND LOYAL JACQUES' PROTEGES, THE AFOREMENTIONED COL. THOMAS AND LTC CECILIO DORCE, GOH MILITARY ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON
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ARE AVAILABLE TO REPLACE JACQUES, AND MOREOVER EACH HAS BEEN CLOSE TO DUVALIER FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. A THIRD, BUT IN OUR OPINION LESS LIKELY, CONTENDER IS LTC FRANCIS CHARLES, ANOTHER PG OFFICER, WHO FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS HAS BEEN THE DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE POLICE FORCE. WE SUSPECT THAT THE TRANSITION, WHENEVER IT OCCURS, WILL BE QUICK, SMOOTH, AND LEAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT A CONTINUING LOYAL LEADERSHIP OF THE PG. END CONFIDENTIAL. ISHAM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, HEALTH, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PORTA00994
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750150-0646
From: PORT AU PRINCE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750411/aaaaakct.tel
Line Count: 69
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 SEP 2003 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <10 SEP 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GEN. JACQUES ILL
TAGS: MPOL, PINR, HA, (JACQUES, GRACIA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006